



## **Backgrounder: Top Five Summer Risk Areas For Kids**

Safe Kids Worldwide research indicates that five of the most common causes of children's accidental injury deaths in summer are:

**Motor Vehicle Passenger Injuries: Deaths from motor vehicle passenger injuries increase 20 percent in summer months compared to the annual monthly average.**

### ***National Motor Vehicle Passenger Injury Facts:***

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of accidental death among children ages one to 14 in the United States.
- Car seats reduce fatal injury by 71 percent for infants under one year old and by 54 percent for toddlers ages one to four in passenger cars. An estimated 1,700 children's lives were saved between 1996 and 2002 solely because they were riding in a back seat.
- Fatal crashes are approximately 42 percent more common in rural settings than urban. Crashes in rural areas tend to be more severe.
- Twenty-five percent of all crashes occur less than five minutes from the home.

### ***Utah Motor Vehicle Passenger Death and Injuries:***

- During 2000-2004, 43 children ages 14 and under died as passengers in motor vehicle crashes.
- Head and face injuries are the most common injury to children involved in a crash.
- During 2000-2004, 9,585 children ages 14 and under were treated in emergency departments with injuries sustained while being a passenger in a motor vehicle crash

### ***Motor Vehicle Passenger Injury Prevention Tips:***

#### ***For Parents and Caregivers:***

- ✓ All children ages 12 and under should be properly restrained in a back seat on every ride.
- ✓ Infants should ride in rear-facing car seats as long as possible, and at least until 12 months old and 20 pounds.
- ✓ Children who weigh between 20 and 40 pounds should be correctly secured in a forward-facing car seat.
- ✓ Children over 40 pounds should be correctly secured in a belt-positioning booster seat or other appropriate child restraint until at least four feet, nine inches tall and 80 to 100 pounds- when an adult seat belt fits correctly.
- ✓ Drivers should walk all the way around a parked vehicle to check for kids before entering the car and starting the motor. Toys and pets should not be kept near parked cars, where they can attract a child into a driver's blind spot.

#### ***For Government:***

- ✓ States should pass primary enforcement laws that require all occupants of motor vehicles to be properly restrained, regardless of age or seating position. Children should be specifically required to ride properly restrained in a child safety seat that is appropriate for the child's age and size.
- ✓ States should pass laws that require primary enforcement in order to allow for a citation to be issued if a police officer simply observes an adult or child riding improperly without a safety belt or a child safety seat.

- ✓ States should pass laws that make it unlawful to leave a child unattended in a motor vehicle
- ✓ The federal government (Congress and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) should continue its incentive grants programs, with appropriate funding levels, in order to encourage states to pass primary enforcement and booster seat laws.

**Drowning: Children's deaths from drowning increase 89 percent in the summer months compared to the annual monthly average.**

***National Drowning Facts:***

- Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death among children ages one to 14.
- The risk of drowning increases more than any other risk area in the summer, compared to the annual monthly average.
- Children can drown in as little as one inch of water and are therefore at risk of drowning not only in pools, spas, hot tubs and natural bodies of water, but infants and toddlers are at risk around wading pools, bathtubs, buckets, diaper pails, and toilets.
- A child can drown in a matter of seconds. Child drownings typically occur when a child is left unattended or during a brief lapse in supervision.
- Irreversible brain damage occurs after four to six minutes of being submerged in water.
- Nearly nine out of 10 fatal drownings occur while a child is being unsupervised by a parent or caregiver.
- Most children who drown in swimming pools were last seen in the home, had been missing from sight for less than five minutes and were in the care of one or both parents at the time of the drowning.

***Utah Drowning Deaths And Injuries:***

- During 2000-2004, 49 children ages 14 and under died as a result of accidental drowning.
- During 2000-2004, 334 children ages 14 and under were treated in emergency departments for accidental drowning and near-drowning.

***Drowning Prevention Tips:***

***For Parents and Caregivers:***

- ✓ Actively supervise your children in and around water.
- ✓ Install four-sided isolation fencing, at least five feet high, equipped with self-closing and self-latching gates, around a home pool or spa.
- ✓ Always have your child wear an appropriately sized life jacket when on a boat, near open bodies of water or when participating in water sports.
- ✓ To avoid drain entanglement and entrapment in pools and spas, install anti-entrapment devices.
- ✓ Begin teaching children to swim after age four.
- ✓ Never allow your child to dive into water less than nine feet deep.
- ✓ Empty all containers (buckets, wading pools, etc.) immediately after use and store out of reach.

***For Government:***

- ✓ States and localities should pass laws requiring four-sided fencing or barriers around all pools and spas.
- ✓ They should also pass laws that require layers of protection against pool or spa drain entrapment (such as anti-entrapment drain covers, safety vacuum release systems and multiple drains).
- ✓ The federal government should educate pool and spa users about associated risks.
- ✓ The federal government (Congress & Consumer Product Safety Commission), through the regulatory process, should ensure that pool and spa environments and product features are properly engineered.

**Pedestrian injuries: Deaths from pedestrian injuries increase 16 percent in summer months compared to the annual monthly average.**

***National Pedestrian Facts:***

- Pedestrian injury is the second leading cause of accidental death among children ages five to 14 nationally and the leading cause in Utah.
- Children are at high risk of pedestrian injuries because they are impulsive and have difficulty judging speed, spatial relations and distance.
- Children cannot reliably judge speed, spatial relations and distance until they are at least 10 years old.

***Utah Pedestrian Death And Injuries:***

- During 2000-2004, 52 children ages 14 and under died as a result of accidental pedestrian injuries.
- During 2000-2004, 1,718 children ages 14 and under were treated in emergency departments for pedestrian injuries.

***Pedestrian Injury Prevention Tips:***

*For Parents and Caregivers:*

- ✓ Drivers should obey speed limits, especially in neighborhoods and near schools and parks.
- ✓ Drivers should walk all the way around a parked vehicle to check for kids before entering the car and starting the motor. Toys and pets should not be kept near parked cars, where they can attract a child into a driver's blind spot.
- ✓ Children under age 10 should not cross the street alone.
- ✓ Teach children proper pedestrian behavior, such as crossing the street at a corner, using traffic signals or crosswalks whenever possible.
- ✓ Instruct children to look left, right and left again when crossing a street and to continue looking as they cross.
- ✓ Dress children in reflective materials and carry a flashlight at dawn and dusk and in other low-light situations, such as rainy or foggy weather.
- ✓ Children should not play in driveways, streets, parking lots or unfenced yards adjacent to streets.

*For Government:*

- ✓ States and localities should pass laws that require environmental modifications (such as more signage, lights and crosswalks) and traffic calming devices in order to slow vehicle speeds and enable safe walking.
- ✓ States and localities should pass laws that require stricter penalties and increased fines for violators of stop sign and other traffic laws.
- ✓ The federal government (Congress and the Federal Highway Administration) should continue its support for Safe Routes to School, a program designed to make it safer for children to walk or bike to school. Through this initiative, states can repair sidewalks, execute traffic calming measures and speed reduction measures, improve pedestrian and bicycle crossings, and conduct public education programs to encourage walking and biking to school.
- ✓ States should establish pedestrian safety components in their state Strategic Highway Safety Plans.

**Falls: Deaths from falls increase 20 percent in summer months compared to the annual monthly average.**

***National Facts About Falls:***

- Falls are the leading cause of accidental injury among children. Nearly 40 percent of all nonfatal injuries to children are associated with falls.
- Head injuries are associated with the majority of deaths and severe injuries resulting from falls.
- Because falls are associated with a child's curiosity and development of motor skills, children ages 10 and under are at the greatest risk of fall-related death and injury.

- Toddlers are at risk of falling from windows, and older children tend to suffer falls from playground equipment.

***Utah Deaths and Fall-Related Injuries:***

- During 2000-2004, 7 children ages 14 and under died from accidental falls.
- During 2000-2004, 98,517 children ages 14 and under were treated in emergency departments for injuries from falls.

***Prevention Tips:***

*For Parents and Caregivers:*

- ✓ Actively supervise children when they play on a playground and make sure they use age-appropriate equipment.
- ✓ Playground surfaces should be covered 12 inches deep with shredded rubber, hardwood fiber mulch or fine sand, extending at least six feet in all directions around the equipment. For swings and slides, even more coverage may be needed; follow the recommendations of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's [\*Handbook for Public Playground Safety\*](#).
- ✓ Make sure kids wear the right protective gear, properly fitted, when practicing and playing team sports.
- ✓ Keep chairs, cribs and other furniture away from windows and install window guards on all windows above the first floor.
- ✓ Don't allow children to play on balconies, roofs, or near open windows without a window guard or window stop.

*For Government:*

- ✓ Playgrounds built with taxpayer money (such as schools and parks) should meet all safety guidelines and should be regularly inspected for safety.
- ✓ States should adopt U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) / American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) playground equipment guidelines as state law.
- ✓ The CPSC should regularly revisit its playground equipment guidelines to ensure they properly address emerging play risks from new activities / equipment.
- ✓ Strengthen state laws on playground safety and ensure CPSC playground equipment guidelines are used consistently in site assessments.

**Biking and other wheeled sports injuries: Deaths while biking accidents increase 45 percent in summer months compared to the annual monthly average.**

***National Biking Facts:***

- Head injury is the leading cause of death in bicycle crashes.
- The single most effective safety device available to reduce head injury and death from bicycle crashes is a helmet.
- A national observational survey found that child riders of all wheeled sports ages five to 14 wore helmets when riding bikes only 33 percent to 50 percent of the time, depending on where they were riding.
- Children ages 10 to 14 are at greater risk of traumatic brain injury from a bike crash than younger children, most likely because helmet use declines as children age.
- Bicycle helmets have been shown to reduce the risk of head and brain injury by as much as 85 percent.

***Utah Biking And Other Wheeled Activity Deaths And Injuries:***

- During 2000-2004, 9 children ages 14 and under died in bicycle crashes with motor vehicles.
- During 2000-2004, 11,212 children ages 14 and under were treated in emergency departments for bicycle-related injuries and 63 were hospitalized for an extended period.

- Nearly half of those hospitalized from bicycle crashes were diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury.
- During 2000-2004, 2,129 children ages five to 14 were treated in emergency rooms for inline skating and roller-skating injuries.
- During 2000-2004, 943 children ages 14 and under were treated in emergency rooms for injuries involving non-powered scooters.
- During 2000-2004, 2,797 children ages five to 14 were treated in emergency rooms for skateboarding injuries.

***Biking And Other Wheeled Activity Injury Prevention Tips:***

*For Parents and Caregivers:*

- ✓ Make sure your child wears a helmet and other protective gear every time he or she bikes, skates, skateboards or scooters.
- ✓ Make sure the helmet is level on the head, snug, with the chin strap buckled.
- ✓ Don't place your child on a bike he or she will "grow into." Your child's feet should be able to touch the ground when sitting on the seat.
- ✓ Teach your child the rules of the road including obeying all traffic laws.

*For Government:*

- ✓ States and localities should pass laws that require helmets when participating in wheeled sports such as skateboarding, non-powered scooters, and in-lines skates.
- ✓ The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration should continue to encourage states to adopt state helmet laws.
- ✓ States and localities should implement actions to make streets safer for bicyclists, such as putting in place bicycle paths, better bicycle signage and better road surfacing.

**For more information contact:**

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